

A Ride Home by glorious_spoon

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Summary:

Steve asks Jonathan to give Nancy a ride home. Missing moment from 'Trick or Treat, Freak'.

A Ride Home

When a hand clamps down on Jonathan's shoulder from behind, he spins around with his fists up. He's already wound tight by the music and the press of bodies, the smell of cheap booze and the sickly-sweet reek of somebody's joint, all the goddamn *people* that he doesn't know, doesn't want to know, doesn't know what the hell he's doing here anyway when Nancy is nowhere to be seen.

So, yeah. A fight might actually be an improvement.

"Don't fucking start," says the person attached to the hand, and Jonathan blinks, for a moment completely wrong-footed.

"Steve?" he asks, after a long moment. Steve looks like shit; his eyes are red, his hair disheveled; there are plum-colored fingerprints on his shirt, like somebody was grabbing at him with jam-covered fingers.

He was arguing with Nancy earlier. Jonathan remembers that. He tries not to pay attention to things like that— for one thing, it's none of his business; for another, he's not exactly unbiased when it comes to anything involving Nancy— but it was kind of hard to miss.

"I've had a really shitty night, so don't even try it," Steve says, and releases him. It's clearly meant to sound cool and cocky, but honestly, he just looks tired. Tired and *hurt*, like somebody ripped his heart out and stomped it into the sticky floor, and Jonathan doesn't actually want to give a shit about Steve Harrington's feelings, but he kind of can't help it. It's a curse.

"What happened?" he asks. Although, considering that Steve is here and Nancy is nowhere to be seen, it's not hard to guess.

"Like I said, it's been a really shitty night," Steve says. He pauses, scanning the crowd, and whatever he sees makes his brows pinch together. "Look, Byers, you're the only person here I can trust, okay —"

"What are you talking about?"

“Shut *up*,” Steve says, and he actually sounds pained. “You care about Nancy, right?”

Heat flares in Jonathan’s cheeks. “I’m not, I don’t—”

“I don’t fucking *care*, okay,” Steve says, which is a lie if Jonathan’s ever heard one. “Can you get her home? Like, now?”

“Why don’t you—”

“She doesn’t want to talk to me,” Steve interrupts. “Okay? She doesn’t fucking want anything to do with me, but she’s drunk off her ass and I can’t just fucking leave her passed out in the bathroom. So can you get her home, yes or no?”

“I,” Jonathan says, but there’s really only one answer, has only been one answer since Steve said Nancy’s name. “Yeah. I’ll get her home.”

Steve nods, and something in him relaxes. “Good. That’s good.”

He claps Jonathan on the shoulder again, and steps back; his eyes look oddly lost in a way that Jonathan has never seen from him. Steve is all confidence and bluster, has never let these kinds of cracks show. Somehow, it’s not gratifying in the way that Jonathan always sort of thought it would be. No more than beating the shit out of him was, last year.

Maybe it’s that that makes him reach out and touch Steve’s shoulder. Maybe it’s just that he’s never been able to stand seeing something in pain. It’s a weakness that he’s never quite been able to shake, no matter how much Lonnie used to try. “Hey. I’ll take care of her, okay?”

“Okay,” Steve says, after a moment. And then, “You’re a good guy, Byers. I get what she sees in you.”

Before Jonathan can even begin to come up with a response to that, he’s gone, sliding effortlessly into the crowd like a fish into water.

Jonathan stares after him for a moment, then goes to find Nancy.